

Submitter: Hazel Wheeler
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure: SJR33

I am writing to support SJR33, a bill which would amend our state's Constitution to protect the existing rights of all Oregonians, regardless of race, gender, or sexual preference. All Oregonians deserve to have a consistent, level playing field to stand on in regard to their personal rights to exist, marry whom they love, to create families, and to support our children and families in the ways they individually need.

As a proud Oregonian and mother, I have watched as rights have been denied, granted, stripped away, granted again.... enough is enough. Our state's institutions require a constitution whose language makes it simple to understand: no matter who you are, who you love, what color of your skin or what gender presentation you display, you have the right to exist, get housing, receive services, get married, share property, file taxes with your spouse, and have the ability to live your life in the fullest.

As the mother of a teen, who is figuring out who he is every day as a person, I want to know that our state's constitution will support him being able to be with whomever he loves. As the auntie of a gay adult man, I am celebrating his upcoming marriage to his partner. I have never seen my nephew so happy in his entire life.

As a bisexual woman myself, who made the choice to love and marry a wonderful man, I want to know that had my chosen person appeared in the body of a woman, we would have been able to marry. Unfortunately, that legislation wasn't passed until the Supreme Court made it legal in 2015. At that point, I had already been married to my husband for four years. It was very frustrating to marry, knowing that some of our friends couldn't do that legally here in Oregon.

While I personally believe that our State Legislation should just pass this already and not put it to a vote from the people of Oregon, some of whom have made it very clear that they oppose other people having the same rights as they do, which is sickeningly hypocritical, if it must be put to a vote, so be it. I remember Oregonians repeatedly voting down rights for LGBTQ+ folks and have a lack of confidence that, due to the culture wars and conservative extremists making trans people a boogeyman currently, Oregonians can vote past their own noses. So, while I hope that this would facilitate a more fair Oregon, I would be crossing my fingers and praying if this makes it to the ballot box. That said, this must be considered as one option-- I just wish that Oregon lawmakers would do the right thing and pass this on its own.

Thank you for your time,

Hazel Wheeler